

A

# REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

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Thursday, March 13. 1707.

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I Promis'd in my last to enter upon the one only thing, which in my Opinion has any possible Power left to hinder the blessed Effects of the Union between the two Kingdoms, now 'tis concluded; and tho' it seems a little too soon to begin upon that, yet I cannot dispense with a slight Touch upon it here, tho' perhaps I may be larger upon it hereafter.

I remember, when I mov'd some Gentlemen in *England*, in a former Part of these Papers, TO BE CONTENT, and to acquiesce in the publick Conduct of Affairs, which were all pointed for the general Liberty; Some took occasion to find Fault with me, as suggesting that they were not so content, tho' I fairly premis'd the contrary, speaking as a Body, beforehand—

I have too much Reason not to fear the like Censure here, where the only Evil, that can poison or any ways obstruct the Benefit of the general Union, has already been attempted, and this is to raise a mutual Distrust between the two Nations; and the first Step to this is to raise a Distrust between the Kirk of *Scotland*, and the Dissenters in *England*.

Before I come to the Particulars of this, I shall take the Liberty here, as I have done mere at large there, to speak of the thing in general.

Thro' innumerable Difficulties, jarring of Parties, some real and more imaginary Discontents, the Union has been brought to the most happy, and I must own oftentimes to me naeexpected issue; the Conditions are so

so great, the Condescensions to Circumstances so many, the Foundation so firm, the Duration so lasting, the Scale of Advantages so equal, that I see no room to doubt the happy Issue, if our own infected Jealousies do not taint the wholesome and reviving Cordial, that both may reap from it.

The Prospect of Happiness, which both sides, abstracted from their Fears, Suggestions and unhappy Niceties, really have before them, deserves a longer Account than can be given here; and if I live to see any of the Successes, which I expect from it, the unthankful Wretches in both Kingdoms, who have so vigorously oppos'd the Felicity of their Country, shall not fail to know it, and be reminded of the Blessings they would have robb'd the two Nations of, by their Folly and Obstinacy.

In the mean time, Providence, that reserv'd this Juncture for completing the Happiness and Peace of this Part of the World, how many wonderful concurring Circumstances, what jarring Causes, what illustrating Contraries, has it brought into the great Chain of this Affair?

I have spent some time to search the Connection of Events, upon remarkable Days and remarkable Transactions in the World, and have made some not unprofitable Observations on that Head. But this is fuller of Wonders than all the rest.

1. *The National Animosities*, which in all former Attempts have been invincible Obstacles, how came they to die at this time, in spite of all the Diligence and Endeavour of a strong and a violent Party to revive them?

What conquer'd the implacable Spirit of the two most violent Extremes in Contrarieties in the World, strict *Calvinism* and *High-Flying Passive Obedience*? What open'd the Eyes of the Church of *England* to see, that the Distance between Her and the *Presbyterian* Church-Government was not so great as to be inconsistent?

What brought the civil Differences and the Religious to a Temper of Agreement, where the Principles of Government, the Constitutions, the Customs and Manners of the two Nations have been always so contrary?

2. *The Circumstances of Europe*. Had not France been so embarrass'd, that he could not look towards Scotland; Had not the Successes of the Confederate reduc'd him to an Incapacity of relieving the sinking Interest of his Friends; Had not the Affair of Spain and the Spanish *West-Indies* drain'd him of all he could spare that Way; What Divisions might 1500 Men, and Stores proportionably, have made in Scotland? — This was the old constant Method of employing the victorious Arms of *England*, when in former Days they were too strong for the French?

3. The extraordinary Circumstance at Home; a Winter so wet, that it was altogether impracticable for any Party to show themselves, Troops to march, or tumultuous Rabbles to get together. What had the little and insignificant Forces in Scotland been, had the inveterate Spirit, which at first appear'd so general, made but one Step into the Field? The whole Force of that Kingdom could not have march'd 1500 Men 10 Miles from *Edinburgh*, without leaving the Court and the Parliament expos'd to the Fury of the exasperated Canaille — But the Season of the Year, the Circumstances of the Country, in short, Heaven and Earth concur'd in the Event; and an eminent Minister of that Kingdom, who to the last oppos'd the Union, and that with more Violence than consisted either with his Office or good Manners, has been heard since to acknowledge, he saw the Finger of GOD was in it, whether for Mercy or Judgment, he would not determine.

Thus Heaven makes those that kick against the Pricks, go on to see it is in vain, and brings Acknowledgments of his Sovereign Providence, from those that oppose, as well as those that concur with his Designs.

If I might be allow'd without Flattery to add to these, *The Concurrence of Instruments*, and no Reflection on any, I must take the Liberty to say; The Choice of Commissioners on both sides to treat; the Choice of Parliaments on both sides to ratifie, the Choice of a High-Commissioner and Council in Scotland to manage, and at last, or rather at first, the QUEEN Her self to push on the

the whole Affair ; these are all a Connection of Wonders.

For the Commissioners —— Why was not the same Treaty brought to a Head the Time before, when Men were named on both sides ? —— Let no Man go farther for an Answer, than to read the differing Lists, and if he knows any thing of Characters or Persons, he might with small Foreight read the Fate of the Treaty in the Names of the Treaters : I shall not descend to Satyr upon their Methods, their Managements, their visible Tempers ; let the Matter of Fact speak for it self, which I shall endeavour soon to lay before the World in a true Light.

The two Kingdoms could not have collected a small Number of Noblemen and Gentlemen, more capable of finishing, more knowing in, more applying to, or more sincerely desirous of the Union ; I court no Man's Favour in this, nor am I going here to write Panegyricks, but the Evidence is in the Fact, and the Circumstances of both Nations explainit.

The Circumstances of the Parliaments on both sides, are things, that deserve a History — *And if I live, they shall have it too* — Wherein I doubt not to make it appear, that, had not all the wonderful Events, which have lately concurr'd, to give England the best Parliament this Age can remember ; all the unsurmountable Difficulties, which like visionary Mountains made the former Attempts of this Kind prove abortive, had never been so easily overcome.

The Foundation of this Harmony was laid in the very Tacking Project, the High-Church Men always do our Work for us. The Memorial alarm'd the Nation, Liberty wak'd out of its Sleep, and the Nation, rous'd by the Noise of these wild People, shook them off, as a Horse does Flyes —— All these Circumstances form'd this Crisis ; Union is the Produce of innumerable Confusions, and Meat is come out of this Eater.

I appeal to the common Experience of any Reader, if this had been a Tacking Parliament, an Occasional-Bill Parliament, if this had been a Parliament, that would have petition'd the QUEEN to advance the Pre-rogative. whether this Union had been pos-

sible ? No, Gentlemen, all these Revolutions were necessary to be made, tho' entirely unforeseen in the Actings, in order to bring this great Event to pass —— 'Tis a Birth of Prodigy, it has requir'd more Antecedents, than any Relative I remember in the World ; and the long prepar'd Appearances of it show it to be a peculiar Period of Providences, which no Action I ever met with in the World, can match.

What Convulsions did *England* suffer to obtain this Pahliment ? What Hurry ? What Memorials ? What Tumults and Riots at *Coventry*, at *Norwich*, at *Honiton*, almost every place where the Party retain'd any Degree of Vigour ? — What Bribing, Swearing and Forswearing have we seen, to endeavour to fill the House with a Party, that had already made themselves obnoxious to the Nation ?

When chosen, what Artifice at the Beginning ? What Management to obtain Party-Ends among People ? What Boasts had we all over the Nation, that a certain Person should be Speaker, and an Occasional-Bill be made Part of a Bill for Security of the Church of *England* ?

And how have the Disappointments of that Party prepar'd the World for this blessed Juncture ? Peace and Union have been the general Exhortation ; this Paper has dwelt long upon them, and at last they are obtain'd ; I have no more to do but to press the World to enjoy the Felicity, and not let a thing of such Consequence be lost to them.

**W**HÈRÈ AS, the Author of this Paper has for some time been out of England, and consequently is suppos'd not near enough to his Affairs, to receive such Letters as are wanted to be convey'd to him ; These are to give Notice, that any Letters left as usual for him at Mr. Matthews will carefully be sent to him, and such Answers as are proper, shall be return'd by him in a Weeks time, either in this Paper or as shall be directed.

Also that all such serious or diverting Subjects, whether Questions or otherwise, as any of the Ingenious Readers are pleas'd to send as formerly, shall be spoken to as usual, in the best manner the Author can do it, which he hopes shall be as acceptable as before.

A D V E R.

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